

AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

Minutes

January 5, 2016

Members present: Al Cyr, Ed Hall, Susan Mitchell, Nancy Rawn, Vicky Wetherell, Jennifer Kaufman (staff), Karen Green (guest)

1. Meeting was called to order at 7:35, Nancy was appointed acting secretary
2. Members present: Al Cyr, Ed Hall, Susan Mitchell, Nancy Rawn, Vicky Wetherell, Jennifer Kaufman (staff), Karen Green (guest)
3. Minutes of the Dec. 1st and the Dec. 30th (special meeting/field trip) were approved.
4. Old Business
 - a. *Regional Agricultural Commission/Committee Meeting on Feb. 9th*- Discussion ensued as to whether there was sufficient agenda to warrant a meeting. Jennifer said she would contact the other committees to see if there was any interest in a Feb. 9th meeting.
 - b. *Farmer's Forum- March 9th*- Jennifer reported that the floriculture building at UConn was reserved and that invitations would be sent out for this event. Suggestions were made as to where to also post flyers.
 - c. *Collaboration with Economic Dev. Commission*- Jennifer confirmed that we will meet with them Thursday, March 24th.
 - d. *Town Leases*- Reports were sent out by email and distributed at the meeting. Jennifer commented on the proposed use of herbicide (Resolve Q) at Commons Fields and discussion ensued. Jennifer offered to contact Tom Wells with committee questions and also invite him to the next meeting to explain in detail his proposal.
 - e. *Soil Health Workshop*-Jennifer updated the committee on Art Talmadge's offer to do a soil health workshop at Cranberry Hill Farm. To be considered at a future date.
5. New Business
 - a. *Appointment of Permanent Secretary*- Nancy volunteered to act as secretary and will consider the appointment.

- b. *Spring Brook Farm*-The Dec. 30th field trip was to Spring Brook Farm was briefly reviewed for all. Karen Green, who owns and operates Spring Brook Farm was introduced and gave a brief history of the 400 year old farm. It has over 500 acres. She raises grass fed beef, sheep, pigs and chickens. She has mostly private sales. She noted that Ravine Road bisects one section of the farm. She stated her preference to have the road permanently closed and turned over to Spring Brook Farm for safety and privacy reasons. A less attractive 2nd option, she stated, would be to have it opened and carefully maintained by the town. (It is currently closed for safety concerns.) If the road were to be discontinued, Karen stated that she would willing to allow the neighbors to continue to access this road for walking and biking. However, she strongly objects to having the road be kept as a public recreational trail because it would encourage further trespassing on the property, which is currently a problem despite numerous fences and no trespassing signs. This interferes with her business and increases her liability and her ability to operate her farm as a viable business.

Discussion ensued by the committee and further questions were asked to clarify Karen Green's concerns.

It was agreed upon that the committee will go in front of the town council to support the viability of Spring Brook Farm. Vicky will summarize the comments and prepare comments for Al Cyr to present to the Town Council on 1/25.

(It should be noted that Stacy Stearns submitted a letter to the Ag Committee stating her opinions about the Spring Brook Farm/Ravine Road issue because she could not attend the meeting.)

Other Committee members agreed to attend as Town Council meeting if they were able.

6. Communications- None
7. Future Agendas- Jennifer stated that she has reviewed the upcoming zoning regulation and did not feel that there were any that needed to come before the Committee. She will email them out to the Committee and if members

feel that they would like to comment, we can discuss the issues at the February meeting.

8. Other-none

9. Public Comment-none

10. Meeting Adjourned at 9:20